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ABSTRACT

From a group of 288 college students that completed the Communicator Style Measure (CSM), 72 subjects were randomly assigned to triads in a study exploring the relationships between communicator style, effectiveness, and attractiveness. The 72 subjects were selected by their CSM scores and stratified into three groups (high, medium, and low). The subjects were asked to make a personal commitment to five symbolic representations of present American values, after which they helped their groups perform the same decision making task. The results suggested that the CSM predicts effectiveness and that the dominance variables seem to be the best predictors. Attractiveness was inversely related to the dominance variables. (Author/RL)

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Communicator Style as a Predictor of Effectiveness and Attractiveness: A Developmental Study

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COMMUNICATOR STYLE AS A PREDICTOR OF EFFECTIVENESS AND ATTRACTIVENESS: A DEVELOPMENTAL STUDY

Two basic communicative behaviors simultaneously influence interpersonal processess: (1) what is said, and (2) how it is said. The former communicative behavior is the literal, the denotative, the content. The latter is the vehicle, the punctuation, the connotative, the style of communication. Recent research indicates that individuals possess particular expressive styles of interpersonal interaction (Bienvenu, 1971; Miller, 1975; Mortensen, 1972; Norton, 1974; Norton and Miller, 1975; Stein and Lenrow, 1970). These expressive styles reflect individual variations of preferred general modes of organizing a stimulus and interacting with it. Communicator style may be thought of as a discernible tendency to enact particular dimensions of style which become distinctive for the individual, by virtue of frequency and generality. Allport (1955) noted that a personal style is a way of achieving definiteness and effectiveness in our self-image and in our relationships with other people. The style that an individual develops to use in the presentation of self to relatives, friends, and acquaintances, implies that there are two kinds of reaction: (a) those which determine what, in a given situation, an individual will do and (b) those which influence the reactions or effects on others.

An abundant, but fragmented, body of research exists which suggests recurring relationships among psychological variables legitimately belonging to the domain of communicator style. Two of the most

frequent variables discussed in this type of research deal with effectiveness and attractiveness. Much of the research has reported that the aggressive, talkative dominant, or simply the more active participant is more effective in interpersonal encounters. Mann (1959) found that verbally aggressive or dominant persons have a significantly greater chance of being designated leaders. Talkative persons control conversations (Pope and Seigmen, 1966); focus contributions to task areas (Bales, 1956; Strodtbech and Mann, 1956; Watson, 1971); influence the adoption of ideas and contribute more ideas to group objectives (Rieken, 1958; Jackson 1967). Bales (1970) found dominance to be a covariate of talkativeness. Further, the dominant person causes other members in the group to feel their power has been substantially reduced (McGrath, 1964). The research mentioned above is concerned with dominant personality traits, assertiveness and talkativeness which are inherent in the style of communication.

Research dealing with attractiveness has indicated that the receptive, encouraging and friendly participant is more attractive in interpersonal encounters. Stass and Willis (1967), and Mehrabian (1969) reported that males and females respond more positively to individuals who look at them when communicating. Holstein, Goldstein and Bem (1971) found that smiling behavior correlates positively with attractiveness. Newcomb (1956) proposed that interpersonal attraction between individuals is a function of the extent to which reciprocal rewards are present in their interaction. Research conducted by Byrne and Nelson (1965) and Byrne and Griffitt (1966) reported a linear relationship between attraction and positive reinforcements. Lowe and Goldstein (1970) investigated the relationship between attraction and

perceived ability. Subjects issuing positive evaluations were perceived to be high in ability and thus attractive. Borgatta, Cottrell, and Mann (1958) reported that the two factors accounting for the major portions of variance, with regards to attraction, were assertiveness and sociability. McCroskey, Weiner, and Hamilton (1975) conclude that specific interaction behaviors may increase ratings in one dimension while contributing to a decrease in another. They reported that talkativeness correlated positively with social attraction and negatively with task attraction. Again, the research is concerned with personality traits inherent in the style of communication, but the literature reported here does not consider one's communicator style as an influence in the degree of attractiveness.

The essence of this paper is with communicator style predictors in relation to the effectiveness and attractiveness variables.

Method

Subjects

Two hundred eighty-eight undergraduates, enrolled in introductory speech communication courses at the University of Michigan, voluntarily completed the Communicator Style Measure. A histogram of the scores revealed a normal distribution. From this pool of subjects, 72 individuals were selected providing a stratified random sample. The stratification assured an equal distribution of males and females. Subjects were assigned to one of the twenty four triads formed. The triads were organized to exhaust all sex combinations, as illustrated. Six groups of each combination were tested.

M M M F

M M F F

M F F F

Measures

Communicator Style Measure. The CSM was initially developed by Mortensen (1972); and Mortensen, Norton, and Arntson (1972). The measure has been refined by Norton (1974); Norton, and Miller (1975), using multivariate analysis and hicluster techniques to determine the infrastructure of the 51 item paper and pencil test. The questions were randomly ordered and inquired of the subject if a particular communicative behavior was descriptive of their style. A seven point scale was provided. The CSM served as the pretest.

Effectiveness Measure. The effectiveness measure is a paired comparison inquiring as to whom has contributed the most to the group product. The individual with the highest rating was considered most effective. In a post hoc analysis, an unobtrusive measure was used. Prior to the discussion, each subject completed the American value discussion stimulus instrument. The objects, representing values, were listed and checked against the group product. If the subject was the only one to list the object which appeared in the group product then the subject was credited with an effectiveness ratio. If the subject got one subject accepted out of five, then the effectiveness ratio was 20%. If two subjects listed the same item, then neither were credited.

Attractiveness Measure. The attractiveness measure consisted of a rank order and each subject was requested to indicate a preference

as to whom they would like to "know better". The individual ranked first most often was designated as most attractive.

Post Communicator Style Measure. The post CSM is a shortened version developed to expedite the evaluation procedures. The post CSM consisted of eighteen representative items identified by factor and hicluster analysis. Each subject completed the post CSM evaluating himself or herself and the other two participants in the discussion.

Procedure

The interaction occurred seven to nine weeks after the CSM (pre-test) had been administered. Before the discussion, each participant was asked to individually determine five objects that best represent or symbolize present American values. The American values case study served as the discussion stimulus instrument. Each subject was allowed seven minutes to read the instructions, note their response and to estimate the probability of each object being accepted as part of the group product. After completing the first task, the subjects interacted in triads for fifteen minutes to mutually complete the same American values task, producing a group product. After the discussion, the subjects evaluated himself or herself and the other two participants' communicator style using the post CSM. The subject was also asked to evaluate the other participants' effectiveness and attractiveness.

Results

Johnson's (1967) hicluster technique grouped the CS variables as expected. Table 1 shows the results. Item 23 shows the most appro-

Insert Table 1

about here

priate set of clusters. The dominant cluster (items 11, 21, 26, 33, 34, 28, 40, 47) is the most cohesive set of variables. This is not surprising since the parent of the CSM was Mortensen's (1972) intensity scale. The second most cohesive variable set complements the dominant cluster; it is a listener oriented cluster composed of items 3, 46, 20, 38, 43, 44, 8, 6, 13, 17, 18, 32, and 35. As can be seen, the other items clustered in such a manner that good evidence is provided for content validity of the CSM.

A factor analysis was done to complement the hicluster analysis. Table 2 reports the results. Basically, the items clustered in the

Insert Table 2

about here

factor analysis the same way they did in the cluster analysis. Items were not listed in the factor unless they loaded at least .60 or greater. Ten factors accounted for 57% of the variance. As expected, the single greatest contributor to the explained variance was the dominant factor. Factor II represents a nonverbal dimension; factor IV represents a minor dominant dimension; factor V suggests an impression leaving dimension; factor VI represents a friendliness dimension; factor VII suggests a minor nonverbal dimension; factor VIII

represents a minor dominance dimension. Representative items from each dimension were used to construct the shorter (18 item) version of the CSM for the post situation.

A series of stepwise regressions (Draper & Smith, 1966) were used to analyze the dynamics of the effectiveness-CS relationship and the attractiveness-CS relationship. Table 3 reports the results of treating effectiveness as a dependent variable and communicator style items as independent variables in a regression analysis. The two best

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Insert Table 3

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predictors of effectiveness in the triadic encounter are items 34 and 32 respectively. These items alone account for 18% of the explained variance in predicting effectiveness. In essence, the strongest dominance variables predict effectiveness. Also, a third dominance variable which loaded moderately strong (.53) on Table 4 provided the third best predictor of effectiveness.

To understand the dominant predictors better, a dominant vector was constructed by summing the variables which clustered in the hi-cluster anaylsis, namely items 11, 21, 26, 33, 34, 28, 40, 47. Table 4 reports the best predictors for the dominant vector. The results indicate that the dominant vector is a function

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Insert Table 4

about here

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of frequency of speech (items 43, 16), contentiousness (item 9), "oral inertia" (items 20, 17), opportune concessions (item 4), impression leaving (item 49), and lack of inhibition (item 46). These nine items account for 86% of the explained variance in predicting the dominant vector. This much explained variance reflects how cohesive the dominant theme is throughout the CSM.

Table 5 reports the best predictors from the CSM for the attractiveness variable. Two items, 33 and 43, explain 16% of the variance in predicting attractiveness. Again, the best predictors are from the

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Insert Table 5

about here

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dominant items. However, the items reflect that attraction is the function of not being perceived as dominant (item 38) and of not speaking for a longer period of time than the average person.

Finally, Table 6 reports the correlation coefficients for effectiveness, attractiveness, the number of items that got into the time capsule, the average percent of pre-task confidence, and communicator style variables. Several observations should be noted. Communicator

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Insert Table 6

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style relates significantly to the person's effectiveness score. Three separate measures provide evidence concerning the stability of the relationship between the effectivenss score and the CS measures.

First, the 51 item CSM taken seven to nine weeks prior to the group task correlates with the effectiveness score. Second, the 18 item CSM taken after the group task correlates with the effectiveness score. Third, (this is probably the strongest evidence) the 18 item averaged CSM filled out by the others on the individual correlates significantly with the effectivenss score. The fact that the pre-CSM correlates so highly (.77) with the post-CSM, provides good evidence that the shorter version of the measure based on the factor analysis was adequate.

Attractiveness and effectiveness were unrelated. This reflects itself in the earlier stepwise regressions. Also, in this task, attractiveness is seemingly unrelated to the communicator style variables. This is understandable since the CSM, as it stands, is mostly a function of dominance items.

Discussion

The initial analysis of data provided an understanding of the multidimensional nature of the CSM and identified prominent dimensions for constructing the the post-test. Johnson's (1967) hicluster technique of analysis revealed that ten factors accounted for 57% of the variance establishing 10 dimensions of communicator sytle. Dominant was the most prominent dimension of communicator style. Dominant was the most prominent dimension explaining 23% of the variance, next was a nonverbal dimension explaining 6%, then the percent of explained variance sequentially dropped to 3%. In other words, the CSM is mostly a function of dominant items.

The stepwise regression used to identify possible predictors of effectiveness supported the first half of the research hypothesis that

dominant correlates highly with effectiveness in the small group setting. It appears that what is said may not be as important as the amount of time taken to say it and that the reactions to others are not concealed. The subsequent analysis of the dominant vector supports the conclusion that dominant is a function of the amount of time speaking, and agrumentativeness. Likewise, as a function of dominant, the effective individual is not very hesitant or inhibited, start and/or monopolize conversations with strangers. Thus it appears that others are impressed by his/her communicative behavior and tend to remember what is said. The dominant vector is also a function of opportune concessions. The individual exhibiting these behaviors is significantly more likely to be effective in group interaction.

The stepwise regression analysis used to identify possible predictors of attractiveness supported the second half of the first research hypothesis that attraction does not correlate with dominance. No positive correlation was indicated in the analysis with the CS variables. However, it does appear as if aggressiveness and talkativeness are actually negative characteristics as is the other extreme of not talking enough. This finding is consistent with the theoretical assumptions of Blau, (1974) and the empirical data of Hays and Meltzer (1972). It appears that a minimal level of involvement is necessary for a favorable attraction score.

The correlation coeffecients provide documentation, indicating that communicator style is significantly related to effectiveness and that attractiveness is not related. This is due possible to the prominance of the dominance dimension in the CSM. The significant correlation between the pre-test and effectiveness and the post-test

evaluation by self and others supports rather conclusively that an individual's style is developed to maximize optimal outcomes in relations with others. Not only is the individual aware of his style's relationship with effective interpersonal encounters, it appears as if others are also able to perceive its relationship.

The extremely high correlation between the pre and post tests provides confidence that the shortened version developed for the post test measured what it was intended to measure. The significant correlation between the self evaluation (pretest) and the post test by others further confirms the research of Norton and Miller (1975), and Miller (1975) that an individual's style can be perceived by others. The post test comparing self and other evaluations revealed an even higher correlation coefficient, further supporting that an individual's style of communication can be accurately perceived by others.

The major limitation of this research is the present state of the conceptual development of the CSM. As indicated, the predominate dimension of the CSM is dominant and as this research and Miller's (1975) suggests, communicator style is multidimensional. Therefore, the other dimensions need to be further developed and refined to accurately assess all facets of an individual's style of communication.

Conclude that individuals possessing a high profile communicator style is more effective and perceived to be more effective in groups. The SCM at this stage of its development does not relate to attractiveness but supports that notion that active communicators are more attractive than non communicators.

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Table 1

Hicluster Grouping of CS Variables

Item
Nonverbal
1. People know when I am displeased even if I don't say anything.
10. My facial expressions are revealing.
41. People can read my nonverbal behavior easily.
51. I gesture a lot.
Impression Leaving
27. More often than not I tend to leave an impression on people.
49. People tend to remember what I say.
Frequent Talker
2. When I am with other people I generally talk often.
25. I am inclined to jump into informal conversations.
16. In one-to-one conversations I tend to talk more than half the time.
Contentiousness
9. I am very argumentative.
50. When I am with others I am inclined to talk forcefully.
37. I would describe myself as an "intense" person in verbal interactions.

Table 1 (cont.)

Item
Dominance
11. I try to take charge of things when I am with people.
21. I have a tendency to dominate informal conversations with other people.
26. In most social situations I tend to come on strong.
33. I would describe myself as dominant in social situations.
34. In omst social situations I generally speak quite frequently.
28. In most social situations I tend to speak for long periods of time.
40. When I am in a group the conversation tends to revolve around me.
47. In most social situations I tend to direct the course of conversation.
Inhibited
3. I perceive myself as introverted, shy, and introspective.
46. I tend to feel inhibited when I talk to others.
20. When I am with others it generally takes me quite awhile to warm up enough to say very much.
38. I generally find that I express myself quite freely.
43. I probably speak for shorter periods of time than the average person.
44. I generally rely on others to keep conversations going.
8. I often don't express my views in normal conversations with others.
Listener Oriented
6. I generally prefer to listen rather than to speak.

Table 1 (cont.)

Item
Listener Oriented (cont.)
13. I am inclined to let other people talk for long periods of time.
Others Dominate
17. I am inclined to let other people start conversations.
18. I have a tendency to let other people determine the course of conversation.
32. I conceal my reactions to other people.
Resistance to Persuasion
19. In arguments I tend to change my mind often.
23. I can easily be persuaded.
42. Other people often help me make up my mind.
Hesitating
12. I tend to hesitate when I speak.
36. I find myself pausing often when I speak.
Dramatic
7. I perceive myself as being very bland.
39. I think of myself as entertaining.
Spotty Contributor
15. I prefer to keep my comments brief.
22. I participate in groups only when others ask me for opinions or ideas.

Table 1 (cont.)

Item
Leader-Stroker
31. I openly recognize other's contributions.
45. I readily seek others opinions in a group.

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Table 2

Factor Analysis of CSM

	Item	Loading
Factor I (23%)		
28.	In most social situations I tend to speak for long periods of time.	.76
21.	I have a tendency to dominate informal conversations with other people.	.73
33.	I would describe myself as dominant in social situations.	.70
34.	In most social situations I generally speak quite frequently.	.68
26.	I most social situations I tend to come on strong.	.67
16.	In one-to-one conversations I tend to talk more than half the time.	.66
11.	I try to take charge of things when I am with people.	.65
2.	When I am with other people I generally talk often.	.63
43.	I probably speak for shorter periods of time than the average person.	.61
47.	In most social situations I tend to direct the corse of conversation.	.60
Factor II (6%)		
10.	My facial expressions are revealing.	.77
41.	People can read my nonverbal behavior easily.	.73
5.	I say a lot with my eyes.	.61
Factor III (5%)		
17.	I am inclined to let other people start conversations.	.72

Table 2 (cont.)

Item	Loading
Factor III (5%)	
18. I have a tendency to let other people determine the course of conversation.	.69
Factor V (4%)	
27. More often than not I tend to leave an impression on people.	.67
Factor VI (4%)	
45. I readily seek others opinions in a group.	.71
31. I openly recognize other's contributions.	.70
Factor VII (3%)	
1. People know when I am displeased even if I don't say anything.	.63
Factor VIII (3%)	
36. I find myself pausing often when I speak.	.71
12. I tend to hesitate when I speak.	.64
Factor IX (3%)	
35. In most social situations I am inclined to let other people get in the last word.	.60
Factor X (3%)	
13. I am inclined to let other people talk for long periods of time.	.67

Table 3

Stepwise Regression of CS Items on Effectiveness

Coefficient of Determination	Standard Error	Item	t
.12	2.67	34. In most social situations I generally speak quite frequently.	2.98**
.18	2.60	32. I don't conceal my reactions from other people.	2.22*

*p .05

**p .01

N = 68 (four of the effectiveness scores had to be discarded because subjects did not want to discriminate)

Table 4

Stepwise Regression of CS Items on Dominance Vector

Coefficient of Determination	Standard Error		Item	t
.53	5.66	43.	I probably [do not] speak for shorter periods of time than the average person.	8.61**
.68	4.70	9.	I am very argumentative.	5.52**
.74	4.27	16.	In one-to-one conversations I tend to talk more than half of the time.	3.88**
.79	3.89	20.	When I am with others it generally [does not] takes me quite awhile to warm up enough to say very much.	3.74**
.81	3.74	4.	When I realize that I am losing an argument, I generally concede.	2.46**
.83	3.57	49.	People tend to remember what I say	2.65**
.84	3.45	24.	In one-to-one conversations my nonverbal behavior [does not] tend to say more than my verbal behavior.	2.35**

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Table 4 (cont.)

Coefficient of Determination	Standard Error		Item	t
.85	3.33	46.	I [do not] tend to fell inhibited when I talk to others.	2.33*
.86	3.24	17.	I am [not] inclined to let other people start conversations.	2.05*

*p .05

**p .01

N = 68 (four of the original 72 Ss had to be discarded because they did not want to discriminate)

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Table 5

Stepwise Regression of CS Items on Attractiveness

Coefficient of Determination	Standard Error		Item	t
.06	.97	33.	I would describe myself as dominant in social situations.	-2.01*
.16	.92	43.	I probably speak for shorter periods of time than the average person.	-2.83*

*p .05

**p .01

N = 68 (four of the original 72 Ss had to be discarded because they did not want to discriminate.

Table 6

Correlation Coefficients for Effectiveness and Attractiveness and Communicator Style Measure

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Effectiveness	-----						
2.	Attractiveness	.09	-----					
3.	CSM Pretest	.28*	.04	-----				
4.	CSM Posttest: Self Perception	.31**	.02	.77**	-----			
5.	CSM Posttest: Others' Perception of Self	.31**	.01	.25*	.35**	-----		
6.	Number of Value Objects Accepted	.17	.09	.22	.19	.02	-----	
7.	Average Percent of Pretask Confidence	.00	.03	.08	.06	.15	.02	-----

*p .05

**p .01

N = 68 (four of the original 72 Ss had to be discarded because they did not want to discriminate)